The COMMONWEAL

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General to General

THE wind-up of the North African campaign has brought the news—in a terse London dispatch to the *Times*—that victorious Allied forces will deal only with commanders of the Axis armies, not with their governments. This means several things. It first implies "unconditional surrender." Then terms dictated by the victorious to the defeated commanders. A period of military occupation, and finally (and most difficult of all) the emergence and recognition of some sort of "free government" within the defeated country.

Making the cessation of hostilities a strictly military affair has a number of advantages. It does away with the need for finding at a week's notice a new government with both the authority to speak and a politically clean bill of health. It makes it less possible for Germany or Italy to set up some half-baked substitute for their present régime, a new authority whose word would be no more trustworthy and who would retain for the present ruling groups as much as possible of the power they have so shamefully abused. At the other extreme, a peace between generals in Europe, followed by military occupations, will do much to curb the anarchy and violence so likely to follow long years of oppression and persecution. Despite all this we must still utilize to the utmost the weapon of propaganda among the peoples of the Axis countries. We are not yet making the most of our potential political weapons.

It has long been held advisable to separate cessation of hostilities from the drawing up of the post-war settlement. At the end of a war as bitter as this one men are psychologically incapable of thinking in terms of normal workaday life. During the arduous experiences of their struggle for survival they have also developed new philosophical and political concepts which make impossible a return to pre-war ways of looking at things. Finally, until relief and rehabilitation have succeeded in setting the embattled peoples on their own feet again, the outlines of the post-war economy cannot begin to emerge. And political arrangements that do not harmonize with the new peacetime economic realities can be neither just nor stable.

The military peace postpones practically all the most difficult problems. And, as with General von Arnim, the Axis commanders may refuse to come to terms. But viable political solutions cannot be arrived at until starvation is assuaged, passions have cooled and the common man has some assurance that he can earn the bread for his family in security and concord. Yet postponing the definition of post-war economic agreements, the drawing of new boundaries and setting up the new international organization that is to prevent aggression does not mean that we can put off war aims too. In fact it makes all the more imperative the formulation in detail of the principles on which the United Nations will seek to re-establish the post-war world.

"Plough Deep While Sluggards Sleep"

THEY WANTED cheap labor; laborious labor; docile labor. There were the Japanese, and so they got them. It started late in the eighties and continued for about thirty years. There were never hosts of them, but they were welcome. "They started out working for less, and infuriated labor; they wound up working for more, and infuriated management." Because they followed with ideal precision all Ben Franklin's advice to young men who wanted to succeed in the world. They worked harder than we would work, and for less money. And they saved what little they earned until they themselves could buy a piece of California's fertility.

Soon, just as Ben Franklin knew would happen, hard work and thrift bore fruit. Soon these people practically controlled in California the crops that need a lot of manual work: tomatoes and peas and celery and lettuce. They were also the middle men and the retailers and the canners. They largely became a substantial, self-respecting middle class; their sons were going to college, were becoming doctors (the good ones with white practices) and lawyers and professors at universities. All of which must have been a thorn in the flesh for the native sons of the Golden West. What now of Caucasian superiority?

After Pearl Harbor the FBI rounded up a

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The Inner Forum

Grail Summer School

ANOTHER EXAMPLE of a European Catholic movement that has produced a counterpart in the American Church is the Grail movement of Libertyville, Illinois, which has just announced a new series of summer courses designed for Catholic young women.

Running from June 12 to September 29, these courses will be on such subjects as the Rôle of Women in a Christian World Reconstruction, Catholic Culture, the Adventure of the Land, the Liturgy and Plainchant of the Church, and the Principles and Practices of Rural Living. Through July and August there will be four two-week periods during which 100 underprivileged little girls will come out from Chicago to spend vacations on The Grail's Doddridge Farm.

In its literature The Grail says that "These courses will be new and valuable experiences in full Christian living. We will take our example from the early Church and live together as a 'community' of young laywomen, helping each other to develop our natural and supernatural talents, learning initiative and responsibility, arriving at a clear understanding of our future tasks as Catholic women and modern apostles; and above all, becoming aware of our oneness in Christ.

"The courses are not schools with examinations or grade points. They are not meant to be retreats or social gatherings. But they are periods where we will leave behind us our ordinary occupations and environments, and come together to work out the ways in which as young Catholic women we are going to use our chances to 'redeem the time.' "

The training program of The Grail, which is only a few years old in this country, enjoys the approval, direction and encouragement of Archbishop Stritch and Bishop Sheil of Chicago. Two of the courses are for young women between the ages of 17 and 25; others are also open to girls of high school age by special application. Fees run from $10 to $40 depending on the course and individual means. Applicants should address themselves to Miss Mary Louise Tully, The Grail, Libertyville, Illinois.

Originating in Holland and later popular in England, the Grail movement included an order of cloistered, contemplative nuns at the top and below this varying forms of apostolate and dedication for young women; for example, working in shops and factories to promote the Christian spirit directly among women workers or cooperating with various Catholic youth and working class movements. In this country, however, the Grail has so far emphasized the rural aspect of its mission.

CONTRIBUTORS

Helen ISWOLSKY is the author of "Soviet Man Now" and "Light Before Dusk."

Jesse STUART contributes another of his tales of the Kentucky hills.

Rev. H. A. REINHOLD will teach this summer at Assumption College, Windsor, Ontario.

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couple of thousand of them, rounded up for safe-keeping all who could possibly be suspected of a dangerous loyalty to the mother country. The rest kept quietly about their business. But the American Legion and the Native Sons and (not officially, of course) the Associated Farmers could not let so happy an opportunity slip through their fingers.

"JAPS KEEP MOVING!" . . . "JAP, DON'T LET THE SUN SET ON YOU IN THIS TOWN!" . . . "JAP HUNTING LICENSE . . . OPEN SEASON . . . NO BAG LIMIT!"

A few of them were beaten up. There were threats that more of them would be beaten up. What to do? Let them weather the storm, with the protection open to them under law? Or appease the people who found the competition too stiff, who would like themselves to make a little money out of tomatoes and lettuce? Appeasement won, and every man-jack of them (and woman-jack and child-jack) was herded off into the mountains and the desert and the far fastnesses of the West, where they were safe against race prejudice. There they still are, most of them. About 110,000 of them, of whom 70,000 are citizens, born here.

What happened to their savings and their goods and their deep-ploughed fields? Here the citizens fared worst of all, unless they were really rich. For being citizens, they could not entrust their possessions to the Alien Property Custodian. But no matter. They are not welcome back in California anyhow. And now a kindly government, which protected them behind barbed wire and watch towers, and which has let them get almost to the point of despair, would like to have them resettle in communities not blessed with local chapters of the Native Sons of the Golden West. Among them there are domestic servants, skilled farmers and gardeners, mechanics, teachers, laboratory technicians, office workers. Lots of people are looking around wildly to find men and women with these skills. Well, you can get them—nearly 100,000 of them—and with a pretty little certificate of good conduct from the FBI to boot, by just writing a letter to the government. They would like to come; they have always been known to be good workers. And although this fact may be irrelevant, among them there are several thousand Catholics.

All Disquiet on the Political Front

IN THE FACE of a stronger, more confident Republican Party than we have seen since 1932, the opposing forces appear to be torn by a singular confusion and disunity. On the national front Southern Democrats have set up a powerful reaction to President Roosevelt and the New Deal, while here in New York both Tammany and the Labor Party are shaking with internal ailments and battles for control.

A committe headed by State Senator Donovan wants to divorce the New York County Democratic organization from Tammany and oust Michael J. Kennedy, pro-Roosevelt chairman, from the county leadership. Senator Donovan accuses the present leaders of having made an election deal last November with Vito Marcantonio and the left (communist) wing of the American Labor Party.

Meanwhile this Mr. Marcantonio, head of the forces that control the ALP in Richmond and New York Counties, has sounded the charge for another all-out onslaught on the right-wing element (LaGuardia-Counts-Dubinsky), which is still on top in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and New York State as a whole.

Typical of the comrades' weakness for tipping their mitt, telegraphing the real nature of their peculiar reasoning, the Marcantonio statement deserves to be pigeon-holed as a significant political document. It says in part: "Those who have utilized the execution of enemies of the Soviet Union, like Alter and Ehrlich, and have heaped abuse on a great objective motion picture like 'Mission to Moscow,' are only seeking to weaken the bonds that tie us to our fighting ally. By pursuing a policy of Soviet-baiting and red-baiting they carry out the orders of Hitlerism. They are *enemies of the United Nations and in the first instance enemies of the American people* and deserve no place in American public life [italics ours]."

Or in other words, people like John Dewey, whose letter to the *Times* so clearly revealed the absurd and dangerous untruths of "Mission to Moscow," or Mayor LaGuardia and James B. Carey, both of whom protested the Ehrlich-Alter executions, are all enemies of the American people, and don't try to give us any back talk. If this is true, why stop at political reprisals, Mr. Marcantonio? Maybe we should have some mission-to-Moscow trials.

While the two wings of the local ALP thus square off for the August primaries, Mayor LaGuardia proposes a national Labor Party, presumably with each state having its own little push-and-pull between right and left wings. Actually the Mayor's suggestion sounds like the old third-party threat of American progressives, a threat which turns up before every presidential election and which last came true in 1924. In short, if the Democrats don't renominate Roosevelt (the only progressive who has a chance), then we can expect a third candidate or a shift of the liberal-labor vote to someone like Willkie, that is, assuming the one-world Willkieites win out over the hundred-world isolationists within the ranks of the GOP. For even the renovated Republicans are having their own little tug-of-war, their own little battle for control.

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The Japanese

THERE is no one to intercede for the Japanese. We bomb Le Havre, and sometimes you were on the ship as it went past the semaphore at the harbor gates and the strollers would be standing there under the French flag and the signal flags run up on the semaphore, and sometimes you would have had lunch with friends and you would have driven them to the ship and after they had gone aboard you would have driven back to town over the bridges across the water and then through the town to the semaphore with the bright flags flying and you would have stood there until the ship came from the inner harbor and passed the semaphore sailing for America.

There is no one to intercede for the Japanese, not even any monuments.

We bomb Civitavecchia, and there was the tablet to Henri Beyle on the wall of the building in the square, and there was the port with the freighters there, and the French had landed there to march over the rolling hills to the fighting at Porta Pia. You would go into a valley and then the dome of Saint Peter's would disappear and then you would come to the crest of a hill and there would be the fort at Monte Mario and the cypress trees. There was the port and the walls of the Customs House, with the papal coat of arms, and the fishermen would be mending their nets and drying them stretched out on the stone embankment. You would sit in the cool, dark "Gobbo" and at noontime no one would be moving at all outside in the heat in the port. We bomb Civitavecchia, Naples, Palermo, Cotrone and we can't help remembering what it is we are bombing.

There are no memories to intercede for the Japanese.

We bomb Essen—and there is always someone to put all the blame on the Prussians. There are the nazis and the Prussians and there is always someone to tell you about Goethe. There is always someone who likes the Bavarians; someone to tell you there are Germans and Germans.

There are the churches. Our Lady of Paris, Our Lady of Chartres. Péguy walks across the plain of the Beauce and the cathedral rises on the horizon above the wheat fields. There is the cathedral of Cologne; in Berlin, Saint Hedwig's; in Naples, the Madonna delle Carmine. Whether we bomb, whether the enemy bombs, it is the same thing. It is impossible not to see the buildings, not to see the people, not to stand with the people watching the buildings after they have been bombed. There are the quiet English villages, the ruins round Saint Paul's; there is all the poetry that has ever been written about England.

There is no poetry that we know, there are no monuments that we remember, no girls, no restaurants, no Riviera, no Venice, no saints, no churches: there is nothing to intercede in our minds for the Japanese.

Well, almost nothing. There are the print rooms in museums; Lafcadio, perhaps, Lafcadio Hearn, but he would be for another generation, for a sensitivity entirely different from ours; Puccini—the three ladies in a box at the opera, the Hokinson drawing in the *New Yorker*: "Well, there's one good thing about it. We won't have to feel so sorry about poor Madame Butterfly any more." Fujiyama on a postcard? The best would be the Japanese jugglers in the Music Hall: the balls rising in the light, the hands almost motionless, the hieratic ceremonial.

That does not add up to very much. If we had known the Japanese who have lived here in America, if we had known the American citizens of Japanese descent, that would have helped, but it is hard now to know them: we have locked them up.

★

You can only fight human beings, you can only kill human beings when the shot you fire, the bomb you release, echoes in your own heart, explodes, also in your own heart. You can only fight in honor when you fight also in anguish. You can only kill when you are killing your brother. You cannot mobilize man with his soul and his mind and his love except to fight in a civil war. You do not mobilize man to fight against monkeys, against rats, against yellow-bellied monkeys, against rats that dress like men. Killing is infamous unless it is a necessary disaster—the troops advance and there is only infamy unless in the pockets of the enemy dead there is found the love letter to the girl in the town, in the village, unless there is found the pocket edition of Shakespeare, of Goethe, the New Testament, the Old Testament, the book of wild flowers, the handbook of astronomy. It is infamous to kill without the knowledge that the blood coming from the mouth of the dead enemy—the flies heavy on it—comes from the child, from the schoolboy, from the young man, from the young lover, from the one who is mourned. It is infamous to kill—it is also infamous to die—unless we know, always, that impartial death visiting all camps, all armies, everywhere, under all flags, from all the broken bodies, the yellow bodies and the white, the black bodies and the white, releases the singular deathless soul.

There is no one to intercede with us in our minds so that we may remember that the Japanese are men as we are men. There is always someone for the Germans, for the Italians, but no one for the Japanese. When we shall enter Italy there will be men with whom we can speak; when we shall enter Germany, victorious, we will respect the vanquished. Do we know, even, whether Japanese can weep?

C. G. PAULDING.

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Soviet Culture Today

The National Renaissance

By **Helen Iswolsky**

ONE of the most remarkable consequences of Russia's struggle against Hitler is that it has silenced the voice of communist propaganda inside the Soviet Union. Official spokesmen clearly stress that the only Soviet slogan is patriotism. Wrote Ilia Ehrenburg in *Red Star* (January, 1943):

> National consciousness is in the air of our times. The cosmopolitism of the nineteenth century is a thing of the past. The dreamers, who were patriots of time and space, have died out. . . . I fear nothing more than the "mankind lovers" who are egoistically indifferent to their own mothers and children.

Alexis Tolstoy, gifted Soviet writer, author of "Peter the Great," openly stated: "We have escaped from the pathos of internationalism and cosmopolitism, which was something false, and have come to an understanding of the motherland." And he added that Soviet literature "is becoming really the people's art."

These words can be applied to Soviet culture as a whole. In all branches of literature, poetry, the drama, painting, historical research and even religion (thanks to a certain relaxation of anti-religious measures), Russia is awakening to a deep national consciousness. Instead of professing the communist creed, she is recalling the thousand years of her historical past. "We must not lose old mother Russia," writes the popular Soviet poet A. Tvardovsky:

> Our grandfathers, our children,
> Our grandchildren forbid us to lose her.
> How long have we lived?
> A thousand years or more!

I pointed out a few months ago in THE COMMONWEAL that Soviet literature is entirely devoted to patriotic and war subjects. A survey of Soviet literary production made in the spring of 1943 confirms me in the belief that all that is best in Soviet culture today is engaged in what might be called "spiritual national defense."

Many historical novels are published and eagerly read in the USSR: Borodin's "Dmitry Donskoy" and Wladimir Yan's "Trilogy" picture the struggle of the Russian princes against the Mongols. Stories about General Suvorov and Marshal Kutuzov, poems and plays featuring the patriotic resistance of Prince Pojarsky and the merchant Minin against the Poles who conquered Moscow. The life story of Admiral Makarov, the hero of the Russo-Japanese war, and well-known Sergueiev Tzensky's "Brussilov's Break Through" (featuring a famous episode of the First World War, in which the Russian army distinguished itself)—all these works are inspired with pure national tradition. One may even say that Soviet writers today avail themselves far better of their patriotic task than the authors of the Tsarist régime, whose works were often colorless and lacked genuine national dynamism.

★

This historical revival is indeed quite an achievement. Only a few years ago, history was taught in Russia according to the strictest Marxist doctrine. In fact, it was not Russian history which was taught but the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. Thus for instance in Professor Pokrovsky's text-books, Lenin and Trotzky were Russia's only heroes. Russian pre-revolutionary leaders, statesmen, generals and administrators were branded as champions of feudalism. Russian culture before the Bolshevik revolution was a "reactionary bourgeois culture," the product of capitalist economy. As to the Church, it was a paragon of obscurantism, the State's accomplice in the exploitation of the masses.

Pokrovsky's extreme approach to history, initially sponsored by the Party, was later criticized, and his text-books discarded. But even the somewhat more liberal methods applied to the teaching of history preserved the fundamental trend: ten centuries of Russian culture were spent merely in expectation and preparation of Lenin's revolution.

It is only in 1942-43 that these theories have been definitely abandoned. The new text-books recently supplied to Soviet schools are a more or less complete reproduction of the former courses of history as taught in pre-revolutionary days.

Most characteristic of this national revival is the special tribute paid in Sovietland to the aged painter Nesterov, famous long before the revolution for his historical and religious pictures. One of Nesterov's most admired paintings before the revolution was the "Vision of the Youth Bartholomew," representing a young monk of the Russian middle ages absorbed in mystical contemplation.

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Nesterov, who was eighty years old, was well-nigh forgotten before the wave of patriotism swept Russia. Then he became *the* great national painter. On his eightieth birthday, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, the highest Soviet distinction. His death occurred a few months later, and the Soviet press was full of admiring and enthusiastic articles devoted to the deceased. The weekly magazine *Art and Literature,* published in Leningrad, wrote that in his "Vision of the Youth Bartholomew," Nesterov represented ancient Russia's best men, and that the true spirit of Russia lived in monastic cells.

★

Let us now turn from these historical topics to literature describing the present war. It is extremely abundant, and its very abundance makes a choice difficult: the daily press, the periodicals and reviews almost exclusively publish matter relating to the war. We must admit that much of this war literature is ephemeral. The poems and short stories are primitive and often colorless. The novels are clumsily written, and are often cheap imitations of "War and Peace."

However, quite a number of gifted writers have contributed to patriotic literature. The poets Tikhonov, Simonov, Tvardovsky, Surkov, Selvinsky. The playwrights Korneïchuk and Afinogenov, who was killed during an air raid in Moscow. The novelists Alexis Tolstoy, Sergueiev-Tzensky, Sobolev, Shaguinian, Leo Kassil, Vera Inber, Lydia Seifulina, Fadeiev and the regretted Evgueny Petrov, who fell at Sevastopol.

Quite excellent are Sobolev's stories, describing the heroism of Soviet seamen. He describes as follows their characteristic traits: "A spirit of decision, presence of mind, a stubborn courage and an immovable steadiness; a gay recklessness, the contempt of death, and the old sailor fury, the bitter hatred of the enemy."

In Marietta Shaguinian's sketches, we see pictured the new life which war has brought into the plant and factory.

"The front," writes Shaguinian, "has penetrated the gigantic plant. And the front has brought with it military methods. War teaches people to work without talking. The sapper rebuilds the shattered bridge, the artilleryman learns to dig himself in and to count in seconds." And the plant has also learnt this lesson. All former discrepancies have vanished. Why? "Because," Shaguinian explains, the Russians have acquired "the almost physical feeling of Russia." And she describes among other scenes the courageous feat of the employees of the Yasnaya Poliana museum, Tolstoy's birthplace and burial ground.

For hours they fought to extinguish the incendiary bombs which the nazis showered on Yasnaia Poliana: "It was the Fatherland," she writes, "it was part of themselves, their flesh and blood."

That the war has deeply penetrated Soviet life is felt by most of these writers; "War is a great event," one of them declares, while another stresses that the most different men are brought together in this war by "one great and exalted conception—the Fatherland." For each man this Fatherland means "the village, the hut where he was born. And yet the Fatherland is limitless, and every bit of soil recaptured by the blood of fathers and brothers is equally dear to Soviet man."

There was a time in Russia when this feeling of a common soil was lost. Today, "the boy who was born in the Donetz Basin" feels that "the rusty steppes of Magnitogorsk and the snows of Siberia" are also his home. And the defenders of the Dnieper banks eagerly await news from Leningrad, as if it were their native town. Thus writes Wladimir Afanassiev, recalling the thoughts which filled his mind on the eve of battle. These thoughts are typical of the Soviet fighter. Indeed, he does not think about ideologies and systems. He has an "almost physical feeling" of Russia.

★

Very interesting are the collective works of soldiers and commanders which have been recently published. There is for instance the volume compiled by the First Motorized Moscow Division, a famous red guards unit. The various contributors to this volume, among whom figures the writer Yury Lebedinsky, relate their experience and various fighting episodes.

The Eighth Guards Division has also published a book of short stories and recollections. Some of them are written by professional authors, others by amateurs; and some of them are transcribed from oral accounts of peasant-soldiers. Most of these stories are devoted to the commander of the division, General Panfilov, who was one of the heroes of this war and was recently killed in action. There is also a story about the General's daughter, Valia Panfilova, who worked as a nurse under enemy fire and witnessed her father's death.

A special volume contains stories about children, evacuated from occupied territory. The children themselves, aged from eight to fifteen, relate their experiences, the merciless nazi drive, arrests, executions, and the long journey through devastated lands.

There is another book devoted to Soviet women in this war. The heroines of these epics are nurses, doctors, mechanics, managers of collective farms who have replaced the drafted men, factory workers, truck-drivers and guerrilla fighters.

Soviet writers have collected proverbs and yarns improvised by the fighters, as well as fairy tales and legends. Fairy tales are in great demand

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at the front. A woman journalist, Nina Komovskaya, has published in the Soviet review *Znamia* an account of her visits to various hospitals, where she stimulated a real revival of folklore.

In the early days of the Soviet régime, fairy tales were prohibited. They were considered useless and even nefarious, as spreading superstition. Only research workers, who studied folklore from the historical point of view, were permitted to read them. Today this ban has been lifted. And the wounded soldiers listen with delight to the old legends about witches and elves and mermaids and *bogatirys,* the Russian Knights of the Round Table. Many declared that "it did one good" to hear these stories. When Nina Komovskaya visted the "commander's ward," the patients at first received her coldly: they were all high commanding officers, engineers or political commissars, and many of them, the journalist relates, had never heard a fairy tale. Nina Komovskaya started reading to them the story of Ilia Murometz, the most popular of ancient Russian heroes. Soon, the occupants of the ward were carried away by these colorful legends and asked for more.

The soldiers composed and illustrated stories of their own invention: "Hitler's Death," "The Meeting of Hitler and Napoleon," "End of the Axis" and other tales written in the old folklore style.

★

One of the most remarkable phenomena of this war is the abundance of poetry. From the point of view of literary style, not all of it will satisfy the sophisticated critic. And even the most gifted Soviet poets have as yet much to learn from Pushkin and Lermontov. But they are fresh, spontaneous; they give a dynamic expression to patriotism. And they are filled with a burning love of Russia. And some of these Soviet poets are undoubtedly talented. They achieve if not mastery, at least genuine lyrical or heroic inspiration. Most typical of them is Nicholas Tikhonov, the poet of Stalingrad and Leningrad.

Tikhonov is quite a representative man in Soviet Russia. He is president of the writers' union. He has traveled abroad, is well acquainted with English and French literature and is an admirer of Stevenson. He is a promoter of European culture, has done much to develop literature and poetry. And he is an intrepid sportsman, an alpinist, who has scaled the highest mountains of the Caucasus, an untiring traveler, a sturdy soldier. Since the beginning of the war he has spent most of his time at the front or in besieged Leningrad and has published a book of war poems entitled "Flaming Year." His most famous poem is called "The Ballad of the Twenty-Eight Guardsmen." Here are a few characteristic lines:

So there it is, the field of the great battle
With an enemy of an inhuman race,
Where blood flows like the waters of the Volga,
Flooding the wings, the tanks, the heaped-up corpses,
From the most distant heights of the celestial dome
To the frozen pits where the enemy lies rigid.

And there is a picture of besieged and bombed Leningrad:

Immensity of darkened houses
Plunged in the evil likeness of sleep,
The silence of the siege pervades
Leningrad's iron nights.

But the silence is torn by battle,
The sirens call men to their posts
And the bombs whistle above the Neva
Burning the bridges with fire.

Perhaps the most talented of these war poets is Selvinsky. His poems are full both of realism and of lyrical inspiration, like the following:

. . . Once more up to our ears in fire
We dive with you, Russia!
Once more fate carries us along from battle to battle,
And is wrapped in smoke like a mystery.
But in the hour of the great ordeal
I want to cry out: "I am yours!"

Selvinsky, who is one of the most musical of Soviet poets (his early poems were inspired by Gipsy songs) has a vivid sense of nature. War, it seems, has revealed to him with a new force the beauty of Russian landscapes with their birds and animals:

I love your birds, Russia!
The rooks, as wise as peasants,
The falcon motionless in the sky
And his wings spread out in battle,
The kite piping in the corn-fields,
In the magic of the moonlit night,
And the nightingale's suicide
As it breaks off on an incredible note.

War has also brought the poet face to face with tragedy. He has seen the victims of German atrocities lying in the streets of the towns of the Crimea. He has seen the old woman murdered by the nazis, whose open eye "stares deep into the sky, where the clouds are torn."

And Selvinsky goes on to describe the scene of horror: the pit where the corpses were heaped up:

A ditch. Can a poem speak of it!
Seven thousand corpses . . . Jews and Slavs.
No, this cannot be told in words,
Only in fire, in fire.

This poem deeply reflects the wrath and repulsion with which the nazi atrocities have inspired the Russians. Selvinsky really speaks of them in words of fire. And yet they are words of an extreme simplicity:

You may not listen to the talk of the people
Nor believe the newspapers' columns,
But this I have seen! with my own eyes!
Do you understand? I have seen it myself.

★

Many patriotic plays were written and staged in Russia. Some of them have been brought to

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New York, like "Counterattack" and the "Russian People."

The one which reaped the greatest success in Sovietland is "Front" by the Ukrainian playwright Korneïchuk.

This play pictures the conflict which broke out in the army between the commanding officers of the old generation and the young generals who have arisen during the war. The old commander, Ivan Gorlov, is a hero of the Civil War in whom it is easy to recognize Marshal Budenny. One may recall that Budenny, who played an outstanding rôle in the first days of the war, no longer figures in the headlines.

Ivan Gorlov is proud of his heroic past, he is a brave and dashing soldier, but no strategist. He knows nothing of military technique and boasts of his ignorance. Young General Ognev incarnates the new generation. He is a skilled officer, scientifically trained, and opposes Gorlov's improvised and chaotic action. The conflict is bitter, dramatic, and as the play proceeded in Soviet theaters—it was staged in the capital and in many provincial towns—the audience watched it breathlessly. The Moscow Art Theater made a splendid show of it, with the famous actor Moskvine impersonating the old general, and for months the play has been heatedly discussed in the press. It was published in *Pravda* and eagerly read in the fighting lines. When it first appeared, the political commissars, who were still at that time attached to the army, were puzzled and even shocked. They believed that Korneïchuk's play voiced the spirit of opposition, that it was entirely unorthodox and defied the most sacred traditions of Bolshevism.

But the very fact that the play has been sponsored by the Government and has been published in the Soviet official organ proved that it had been written *strictly in accordance with the Party Line.* Besides, young General Ognev, Korneïchuk's hero, expressly states at the opening of the play that he has had a private interview with Stalin and has been specially instructed by him to act against the old spirit incarnated in Gorlov.

*

This old spirit is indeed dead in Russia. Maybe the Soviet Government's present national policy is a matter of expediency. I shall not try to analyze Stalin's actual feelings and convictions. Has he become a genuine national leader? Has he only put aside for the duration his ideology of internationalism and world revolution? This is too intricate a question, and cannot be answered today.

But it is obvious that the mood of Russia, of the Russian people, has changed, and has changed not only for the duration. Communism, internationalism are things of the past. Russia has passed through a tremendous ordeal. She has asserted through blood, sweat and tears the true spirit of the nation. Her eyes are turned toward the new generation, towards young General Ognev, not toward the old leaders.

There is a little poem of Selvinsky, in which he expresses, almost unconsciously, this fading world of the October Revolution. In this poem he describes Lenin's monument in a provincial town:

> In the little square by the sea
> Near the railroad station
> Lenin stands
> A piece of bronze on a piece of marble.

Maybe this is all that remains today of the man who shook the world. A piece of bronze on a piece of marble. But Russia is a thing alive, reborn in the blood of her people, in the fire of epic battles, which have rallied her sons under the banner of the sainted Alexander Nevsky.

The Man Thought He Could Act

***By* Jesse Stuart**

"EPHRINA, don't marry Ophie Tacket," I warned. "If you marry him, it will break my heart. If I am any judge of men, he won't make you a good husband. He won't be content to settle down and make you a home."

"I can't help what you say, Pa," Ephrina answered. "I love Ophie and I aim to marry him. You just don't want me to marry Ophie for you want me to stay here and keep house for you since Ma died. I don't want to stay here and be called your old-maid gal."

I looked at Ephrina. She was the purtiest gal that ever the sun shone on. Ephrina looked like her Ma did when she was young. She had the same purty blue eyes. Her cheeks were the color of the roman-beauty apple in September. The skin on her face was just as smooth and full as the peeling on a roman-beauty apple. Her teeth were white and purty as even rows of whitecorn when the corn-shuck is first pulled down. She had her Ma's slim hands.

I wanted Ephrina to marry but I didn't want her to marry Ophie. I couldn't help it if he was a

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school teacher. I didn't like his eyes that wouldn't stay put. I thought he was a dandy. He wore a gray suit with big checks in it. He wore a derby hat and carried a cane up Laurel Creek when he came to see Ephrina. He wore a white shirt with the bosom starched stiff and a black bow-tie. He talked about acting. He would get down before Ephrina on one foot and one knee. He would make love to her. He'd go on with a lot of foolishness; then he'd pull a box of candy from under his coat for her.

"It won't allus be candy, Ephrina," I said. "When you get married to him, you'll find this out."

When I'd talk this way to Ephrina, I believe it made her love him more. One day in September I was coming home from shucking corn. When I topped the hill above the house, I didn't see any smoke coming from the chimney. I hurried down the hill to the shack. I went inside; Ephrina was gone. I looked around and I found a note tied to the wash-pan. I read the note. She had gone to marry Ophie. She was going to live on Lower Laurel, where Ophie was teaching school.

The year passed and Ephrina and Ophie didn't come to see me one time. I had a time doing my own cooking. That was all right if Ephrina was happy. I often wondered how she was getting along. I didn't go visit them to see. I thought the time would come when Ephrina would remember what I'd told her.

John Porter told me when Ophie bought a new car. That was something. It was the first automobile on Laurel Creek. Ophie couldn't drive it only in summer when the roads were dry. I heard about how he got out on Sunday and raced with horses and mules up and down the creek-bed road, how he'd splash water on people standing by the road to watch the races. John told me how he would laugh when he won the races.

Lars Spears told me when Ephrina had her first baby. Lars told me it was a girl. I didn't go down Laurel Creek eleven miles to see them. They were down at the mouth of the creek and I was up at the head of the creek. I stayed under the old roof-tree where I'd raised my youngins.

Willie Thornton told me at the grist mill one Saturday morning that Ophie told the trustee he didn't want his school back. Said he had missed his calling. Said he was an actor instead of a school teacher. Then Willie asked me if Ophie was teched in the head. I told him I reckoned he had too much sense.

"Not as much sense as you might think," Willie said. "Last year he ordered a pair of roller-skates from an order book. He learned to skate in his house. Soon as school was out he'd run home and skate until far into the night. Now he's rented a terbacker barn that has a wooden floor in it. He puts on a show two nights during the week. People walk for miles to watch him. They call 'im the funny-man on Laurel Creek."

"How's he making a living?" I asked. "He didn't farm last summer atter his school was out, did he?"

"No, he didn't, and he don't charge people to watch his act," Willie said. "It's a free show."

"Have you been to one of his shows, Willie?" I asked.

"Yes, I have, Mister Bell," he said.

"Was it funny to you?"

"I nearly laughed my head off at that fool," Willie said. "He had a big curtain in the middle of the barn and he'd skate on roller skates from behind the curtain. He had his face painted in stripes. He wore a clown suit and a clown hat. He was the funniest thing I've ever seen. He tickled the children to death. Atter he'd get through with his skating act he'd pick up his banjer and sing songs. People laughed until they couldn't laugh."

I first thought I'd ride down on Lower Laurel. I thought I'd take my gun and I'd make Ophie get down on his knees. Then I thought that wasn't the way to do it. I couldn't drive him into doing anything. I'd just wait. If Ephrina was satisfied with this kind of life, I would have to be satisfied. I couldn't live her life for her. If she wasn't satisfied, I thought she could come home to her own roof-tree. I thought it over. I wouldn't go to her. Yet, I couldn't help walking the floor and thinking about her. I didn't have many nights to walk the floor. Ephrina came home.

"I can't stand it any longer, Pa," she said. "Ophie has quit acting in the barn. He's going to town and acting now. He leaves me all night alone. He comes back and sleeps all day. He says he's going over in a big way and we don't have grub in the house."

"You've walked all the way here and carried your baby?"

"Yes, and she's a load."

"What's her name?"

"Clarinda."

I took Clarinda on my lap. I held her hands and let her ride the horsie on my knee. Ephrina looked at us and laughed. But Ephrina didn't look like she did when she left this house. She looked like she'd aged fifteen years.

"Pa, you were right about Ophie," Ephrina said. "He's just what you said he was. But I love Ophie. I can't help it. He's no good to work. He thinks he can act. Maybe he can—I don't know. I was ashamed to go watch him after all I heard—and I didn't like the songs he sung."

"What kind of songs?"

"One of 'em was 'The Horse With the Handsome Behind.'"

"My Lord," I said. "Child, I don't blame you! That is plain bad!"

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"The people liked it," Ephrina said.

"What's this world a-comin' to?"

"Don't ask me," Ephrina said. "What's Ophie coming to?"

"Don't worry about him," I said. "You have a roof-tree over you."

Ephrina did worry about him. She'd wonder what "poor Ophie" was doing for somebody to cook for him. She'd wonder who was washing his clothes. She wondered how he was buying gasoline to drive the car. He wasn't getting paid in town for his acting. He was just making the people laugh!

When I went out to grub sprouts I'd find myself working like fighting a rattlesnake when I thought about Ophie. I just couldn't stand my own thoughts about that man. I could see his beady blue eyes and his big mouth. I could just see him get down on one knee and one foot on the floor and point his hands toward the cone of the barn-loft and sing "The Horse With the Handsome Behind."

I didn't have long to wait. I heard a buzzing sound and I looked down the road. It was Ophie driving up Laurel Creek in his car. He drove up to the chipyard and I met him with my ax.

"Stop where you are," I said. "If you drive another foot nearer my door I'll split your brains out with this double-bitted ax!"

I was shaking all over I was so mad. My teeth were gritting together like flint rocks.

"What's the matter, Pop? You're not mad at me, are you?"

"I'm riled," I said. "You can't do my girl the way you have and get by with it. I'll see you dead and in your coffin first and then you can act! You can act for the Devil!"

"You won't say that some day," Ophie said. "Pop, you'll be proud to come and watch me act. You'll punch some man in the ribs that's sitting beside you and you'll say, 'That's my son-in-law.' You'll be proud of me."

"Proud of you the Devil," I said. Don't you 'Pop' me any more!"

I dropped the double-bitted ax on the ground. Ophie come out'n the car.

"Where's Ephrina and Clarinda?"

"Where do you think they'd be?" I asked him.

Ophie didn't say any more. He hurried into the house.

That night at the supper table, Ophie put away the grub. He was empty as a gourd. I thought he would founder himself.

"I'm going to be with you a while, Pop," he said. "I'm going to drive from here to town until this play is over. I'm not doing the roller-skate act; I'm doing a singing and dancing act."

"Who's going to buy gasoline for your car?" Ephrina asked.

"The Company," Ophie said.

"Looks like the 'Company' could pay you something," I said.

"They don't make enough, Pop," Ophie said. "It's just a little company that is organized to give us fellows with unrecognized talent a break. I'm going to get it too! I'll see my name in the big electric lights one of these days. I'll see Ophie Tackett up there and I'll see crowds down on the street looking up at my name. I'll hear one say: 'Ophie Tackett is that bird that taught school for seventy-five dollars a month and went to acting in a tobacco barn for nothing.'"

"That sounds mighty sweet," I said.

"I'm the only one of all the actors and actresses making a red penny," Ophie said.

"Why is that?" Ephrina asked.

"Now I don't mean to be bragging," Ophie said, "but it's because I am the whole show. If they take me out with my singing and banjer picking numbers, the show will flop and they know it. So they furnish me enough gasoline to drive to town and back!"

"If you are that good you wouldn't be acting here," I said.

"I won't be acting here very long," he said. "I'm heading for bigger things. Listen to my special number!"

"What is it, Ophie?" I asked.

"'Horse With the Handsome Behind.'"

"There's never been a song sung like that in my house," I said. "It's too late to begin now."

"Let 'im sing it, Pa," Ephrina said.

"It's not a bad song, Pop," Ophie said. "Let me sing it for my baby!"

Ophie walked away from the table. He got his banjer.

"Now you are my audience," he said.

He got on one foot and one knee. He looked at us with that silly grin. He spread his big mouth and twinkled his blue-beady eyes. He started plucking the strings on his banjer. Ephrina laughed. Little Clarinda laughed. I bent over laughing. Right when he's acting I forgot all about what he had done. His song wasn't as bad as I thought it was. The "handsome behind" was the buggy that followed the horse.

Soon as Ophie had finished singing "The Horse With the Handsome Behind," he walked over to Ephrina and said, "Honey, I got to be going to Greenwood. I'll have to hurry to get there in time for my act. Gee, Honey, I am the show. The curtain has gone up as many as nine times for my act."

"I can't help it, Ophie, how many times the curtain goes up and down," Ephrina said. "Look at me! I'm living here with my father. You are out acting. You're not getting any pay for it. How can we live? How can this go on much longer? People on Lower Laurel think you are off in the head!"

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"I know it," Ophie said.

I stood and watched the scene. Ephrina stood with tears in her eyes. Ophie walked over and picked up Clarinda and kissed her. "Goodby, my baby," he said. "You've got a Poppie you're going to be proud of. He's a great actor and your mother doesn't know it. But she'll find out some day. And your Grandpa doesn't know it!" He looked at me when he said this and slammed the door behind him.

"I might be nar between the eyes," I thought, "but I allus made a living for my family."

Ophie would go to Greenwood every night and he would come to my home starved nearly to death. He'd go to bed and sleep all day and then he would go again. When I took my terbacker to the warehouse in Greenwood that November, I heard people talking about the "Great Ophie Tackett." I heard the men working in the warehouse talking about him. Everybody was singing Ophie's song, "The Horse With the Handsome Behind." Everybody that I talked to asked me if I'd ever been to the Little Theater to hear the "Great Ophie Tackett" sing and pick his banjer.

I guess Ophie's fame must a-gone to his head. All he talked about at my house when he was there and awake long enough to talk, was acting. "I've got 'em," he said. "People are falling for my act. I'm ready for something better."

"You oughtn't to married Ephrina and left her with a baby," I said, "if acting means everything to you. What are you going to do about your wife and child? You're not the 'Great Ophie Tackett' people think you are."

"Pa, my heart is broken," Ephrina said. I had come from shucking corn and I found Ephrina crying. "Ophie left early today. He's gone back to Greenwood. He didn't even say 'goodby' to me. He said tonight was his big night in Greenwood and he had to hurry back to town."

I thought I'd take my pistol to town, get a ticket to the show, and when Ophie came out to sing his famous song I'd pump six hot loads of lead in him he couldn't carry. Then I thought, "I'm an old man now. I want to live in peace the rest of my days." I just sat by the dinner table and thought of the best thing to do.

"I'll tell you, Ephrina, what we'll do," I said.

"What do you mean, Pa?"

"I know something that worked once when I's a boy," I said. "If it worked yesterday, it might work again today. Now you let me go over on Culp Creek and get your Cousin Charlie Bell. Ophie doesn't know him. Your Cousin Charlie is one of the best looking men in these parts. You be with him on the front row tonight when the show opens. We'll see if Ophie's lost his love for you."

"I don't want to do Ophie that way!"

"Have a little spunk," I said.

I rode the mule over and got Charlie out'n the timber woods. He went home and dressed in his best.

I sat on the front seat and Clarinda rode beside of me. Ephrina and Charlie rode on the back seat. They had a lap-robe over their laps. Charlie had a fall rambler rose in his coat lapel. He wore a high derby hat. When we went down Laurel Creek and met a person he'd stop and watch us until we were out'n sight. I knew that everybody would talk about this. They would say that Ephrina had her a new beau and she was still a married woman and that I was upholding her in her new love affair. I wanted people to talk.

It took us all atternoon to drive to Greenwood. Soon as we reached the town, we hurried to the theater. We looked at the pictures tacked on the wall and there above all the others was a big picture of Ophie Tackett. He was down on one knee and one foot with his banjer across his knee—his mouth was open like he was singing the song that made the people laugh.

"Four tickets on the front row," I said to the girl at the ticket office.

"Two dollars a seat," she said.

"That's not too much to see and hear the Great Ophie Tackett," I said.

"He's really great," she said.

It hurt me to spend eight dollars on Ophie Tackett.

We took our seats on the front row. We hadn't been there twenty minutes until I turned around to look behind us. I saw a sea of faces. The house was full and people were standing in the aisles.

"Now when Ophie comes out," I whispered to Charlie, "you put your arm around Ephrina. You laugh loud as you can laugh and look right at Ophie."

"I'll do it, Uncle," Charlie said.

The lights grew dim. The crowd got silent. The curtains went up.

A man stepped out and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, an important announcement I have to make. Your old favorite, and one that will be a favorite in any show, will make his appearance in this show for the last time in just a few seconds. He will go to a bigger show in a bigger city. He has just received that word. This evening will be the last time for a while that the curtains will fall for Ophie Tackett. I present Ophie Tackett, the dynamo of fun and laughter."

Ophie stepped out on the stage with his banjer in his hand. I never heard such racket as the people made. Ophie smiled and nodded until they got still enough for the audience to hear him. Ophie sang a few pieces—did a little dancing—and then he said, "Ladies and gentlemen—an old favorite of mine, 'The Horse With the Handsome Behind.'" The crowd roared when he said this. Now he got up closer to the edge of the

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stage. He got down on one foot and one knee and held his banjer across his knee. He began to pick his banjer and sing. It seemed like everybody wanted to laugh.

I punched Charlie. He stood up in his seat and laughed like a horse whinneying for his corn. He sat down by Ephrina and pulled her over in his arms. He whispered something in her ear. Ephrina laughed as she had never laughed before.

"Look at Poppie up there, Mommie," Clarinda said. "Grandpa, look at Poppie."

"I see him, honey," I said.

About that time, Charlie stood up with a rose in his coat lapel and let out another big laugh. He sat down by Ephrina and whispered something in her ear. Everybody started laughing as Ophie looked down at us. Ophie stopped playing his "Horse With the Handsome Behind."

The people screamed when Ophie threw his banjer on the stage floor hard enough to break the calf-skin banjer head. Ophie made a wild leap from the stage to the floor. He grabbed Charlie's coat collar with his left hand and he pounded Charlie's face with his right fist.

"I'll kill you!" Ophie screamed.

"You can't do this, Ophie," I yelled.

"No man can court my wife before my eyes," Ophie said.

The crowd rose from their seats. They stood and laughed at Ophie. They thought Ophie was putting on a new act.

"Take him off, Uncle," Charlie screamed.

"He's Ephrina's cousin, Ophie," I said.

I looked at Ephrina and she looked so pleased that Ophie was fighting for her.

Ophie rushed back upon the stage, grabbed his banjer and started his song where he left off. Everybody screamed with laughter.

"He loves you, Ephrina," I whispered, "and he was right about himself. He can act."

As the show went on, I found myself getting proud of my son-in-law, Ophie Tackett. I could see his picture tacked up around theaters; I could see his name in the electric lights.

I just wanted to know if he loved my daughter.

Communications

"THE CHURCH IN DISREPUTE"

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editors: I deeply appreciate Father Reinhold's kind and understanding review of my "Church in Disrepute," in your issue of May 7, even though I cannot but think he fails quite to perceive the attitude toward contemporary world politics contained and implied in the book.

Certainly I do not wish to turn the Church's necessary *confiteor* into a *choosing* to get castigated by wicked men; but I do maintain that occasionally such castigation must be accepted, even by the guiltless, because that is the only

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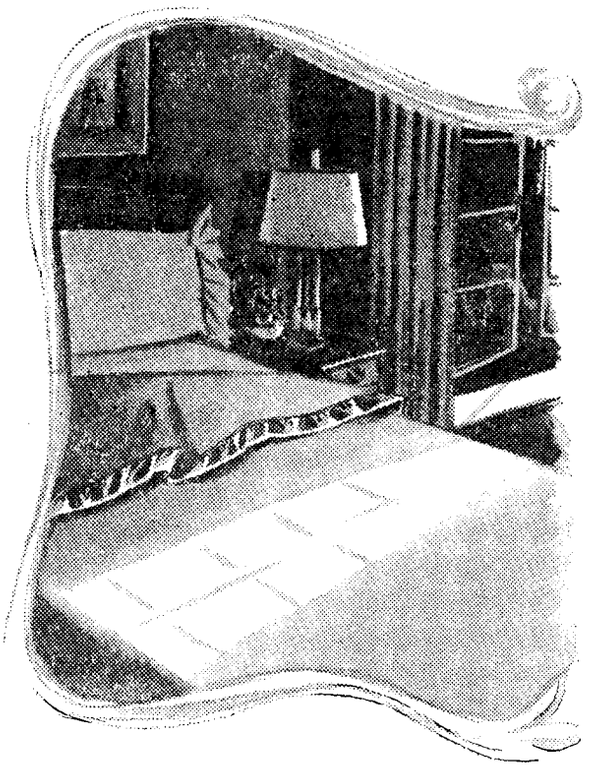

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fruitful thing to do. It happened so once, as we recall when we go through that devotion known as the "Stations of the Cross." What made necessary the beating of the Lord in His *physical* body? It was not merely the brutality of the conquering Roman that caused His unresisting and redemptive agony. There was Pilate, a stupid man not much concerned with thinking things through, a practical administrator with a job on his hands, impatient with the Galilean perfectionist. There were those pious and well-cared-for scholars, the Pharisees; and the Sadducees, who were "Quislings," on-the-make; and Judas of Kerioth, whose home town was headquarters for the Zealots, set on violent effort to maintain the independence of a racial group.

All of these compromising secularists, variant in political program, combined to do the deed. The Lord had no *adequate friends*. What could He do but suffer for the sins of all?

Even so in our day the *mystical* body of Christ is beaten, where it cannot be drugged, by a mixed collection of secularists.

Certainly the Church loathes the programs of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo and rightly so; but is she to trust those groups which are led by Mr. Churchill, Mr. Roosevelt and Comrade Joseph Stalin? It may have been bad for the Church to tie up with Franco (you seem of two minds about that); but should she have blessed the Loyalists?

Pétain may be a senile dreamer, but is the Church to trust de Gaulle? A democracy which has its sanctions not in God but in man gives only leaky cover from the blast of human wickedness. And if none of her secularist friends can be wholly trusted, and if her wisdom is unheeded by the people, is it not true that to be redemptively beaten is almost the only course for Holy Church?

Nor do I think, as Father Reinhold suspects I do, that an "Anglo-American version of totalitarianism" will prevail when the war is over. Russia can be relied upon to prevent that. No one can be quite sure what will come out of the war. I might suggest that we may see, here in America, a sort of unideological communism that will call itself "the American way of life," with a strictly opportunist foreign policy expressed in a highly pious terminology.

Indeed the most likely outcome of this world-war will be another world-war, not long delayed, between Anglo-Americanism and a Eurasia which refuses to play ball unless she can dictate the rules and take most of the gate. Whatever comes, it will hardly be Christian; and the poor old Church will continue to take a drubbing, either rebelliously or redemptively as she may decide.

Finally, I can assure Father Reinhold that I may not ever repay the debt I owe to Maritain; but for all that I cannot escape a feeling that Maritain is not, even yet, willing to look upon the whole of the modern tragedy. Has he not forgotten Bloy, at least a little? Great though Maritain is, I find that I get more out of re-reading Saint Augustine and contemplating the virtues of Saint Benedict. Those were the lads for a dying civilization!

BERNARD IDDINGS BELL.

The Screen

One in Wash; Two on the Aisle

VERY MERRY indeed is *"The More the Merrier."* It is one of those wacky screwball comedies full of fluff and nonsense that sends you into stitches, particularly if you're in need of some good laughs—and who, these days, isn't! The film doesn't consist entirely of escapism, for the locale of its slight story is Washington—Washington today, with its hectic rush, insane living conditions and patriotic, war-minded citizens. Comes a Mr. Dingle (Charles Coburn at his funniest) to the capital to do something about housing projects. He edges his way into Miss Milligan's apartment. Connie Milligan (Jean Arthur putting her plaintive voice into some hilarious lines) is very efficient, a product of the defunct O.F.F., and inclined to be spinsterish—not much, but she keeps a dear diary and hates irregularity. She thinks it her duty to take someone in, but she really intends to share her apartment with a woman—of course. Mr. Dingle promises not to borrow her stockings, etc.; and since he's older, etc., it'll be all right. But Dingle thinks there should be romance in Miss Milligan's life. So when Joe Carter (Joel McCrea with a very dead pan as a very serious but clean-cut young inventor) shows up, Dingle shares his half of a half of an apartment. Miss Milligan is horrified. And the morning arrangements (for washing, dressing, cooking, etc., which Dingle had already described as a steeplechase) now make the apartment look like a mad-house. Producer-director George Stevens has built up the comic situations between this trio to hilarious heights. And the four script writers who thought up the amusing lines did a swell job. But, along about the middle of the film you suddenly realize there isn't any story at all. The whole thing is gags and situations. Then when Joe and Miss Milligan fall in love, their scenes get too soft and mushy. Stevens forgets he's doing a comedy. Then the script writers let him down. To keep the thing going they drag in a lot of unfunny stuff about today's wedding being annulled tomorrow. This flippancy about matrimony, which is completely out of character for Joe and Connie, rather dampens the picture's fun. This is too bad, because the production is excellent and the performances make for first-rate light comedy. What's more, the brilliant satire on Washington is healthy.

Gypsy Rose Lee wrote what was considered a nifty little mystery novel: "The G-String Murders." It had a tight plot and plenty of realistic local color on backstage life in a burlesque theater. *"Lady of Burlesque,"* the movie that Hunt Stromberg made from this book, is so packed with authentic burlesque stuff that the mystery story is almost crowded out. "Girls, that's what the public wants" is the motto of burlesque. So "girls" is what this movie about burlesque concentrates on: the bored chorus girls, the energetic, the worn out, the quarrelsome, the hard boiled girls. The chorus, usually clad in tights, does its routines complete with bumps and grinds; the stripteaser; the leading lady who thinks she has a voice.

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To complete the authentic touch there are the usual males: the straight man, the weary tenor, the comic, the slapstick comedians. On the other side of the footlights is the enthusiastic, whistling, predominantly male audience. After this atmosphere is well established—too well, with realism, bawdy lines, frank portrayal of assorted flesh pots, the first murder occurs. The ill-tempered *prima donna* is strangled with a G-string. Practically everyone in the cast is a suspect. Clews were planted from the picture's beginning. Then a second G-string murder is pulled off. By this time the clews and relationships are so confused you can hardly fit the pieces and people together. The solution is not very impressive after the build-up. William A. Wellman has directed the large cast with an eye for vulgar detail. Barbara Stanwyck gives a realistic performance as Dixie, a lady of burlesque who is neither fragile nor ethereal and whose chief aspiration is to be in a 4.40 show and have Sundays off. Her pet aversion is the comic (Michael O'Shea) who pushes his suit cynically and relentlessly. One novel note in a Hollywood mystery is Charles Dingle's straightforward portrait of the police inspector who is neither a dope nor a clown.

"Presenting Lily Mars" is the kind of a movie that Hollywood turns out every now and then when it has a lot of money and talent to use up and it isn't sure what to do with them. Instead of taking a nice, simple story like the Booth Tarkington tale on which this film is based and making a nice, simple movie, it does an elaborate production which turns out to be a mixture of Tarkington, good music, entertaining high spots, dull interludes and bad taste. The various talents that went into this movie should add up to good cinema. It was produced by Joseph Pasternak, directed by Norman Taurog. It has attractive Judy Garland to play Lily Mars, the stage-struck Indiana girl whose Lady Macbeth will not go down in history, but whose dancing and singing will some day find a place in the theater. It has Van Heflin as John Thornway who is not human (because he's a theatrical producer) but who turns out to be human enough to see the potentialities in Lily. It has Marta Eggerth in good voice, as the "other woman" whom Lily thinks she can supplant. And it has a capable supporting cast: Fay Bainter, Richard Carlson, Spring Byington (the latter is somewhat trying in the Mrs. Wiggsish rôle). It has a couple of swell moments, such as when Connie Gilchrist, as a charwoman sings "Every Little Movement," or later when Lily is being groomed for a rôle for which she is not ready. The department that falls flat on its face in "Presenting Lily Mars" is the script writers who had no idea where they were going. So between Indiana and stardom, they shoved the Tarkington original around and piled cliché upon oft repeated gag. It ends with one big production number in which Judy sings and dances effectively, and Tommy Dorsey and Orchestra play like all get-out. This elaborately staged finale inappropriately hangs onto the end of the picture to show you what Lily Mars will do some day and to make you forget the picture's previous dullness.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

SOUTH AMERICAN JOURNEY. *Waldo Frank. Duell.* $3.00.

FOUR QUARTETS. *T. S. Eliot. Harcourt.* $2.00.

KANSAS IRISH. *Charles B. Driscoll. Macmillan.* $2.50.

The Heart Wins

THERE are ways in which to review this book. You could make it seem ridiculous and conceited and unworthy even of the talents of its author. Or you could brush aside a tear and exclaim, the pity of it all. Or you could honestly admit that its virtues in some magical way make you forget its faults. And the last would be the most honest.

Mr. Frank has an unexcelled talent at talking about himself and making the reader like it. He also somehow can continuously assume a vast importance for his knowledge, for his influence, for his opinions without at the same time irritating the reader beyond patience. The truth about him seems complex. He undoubtedly knows a vast amount about Latin America—about its literature and culture and politics and economics and soul. One suspects that this knowledge is not achieved by normal paths. He is not a man to sit down carefully and get the documents and study them and then come to a synthesis. He seems to absorb things through his pores, through his skin, through his intuition. And the results he arrives at have both the faults and the merits of his method. Not that he could change the method, for it is innate in him.

A few months ago a long review in THE COMMONWEAL discussed the findings of an American sociologist who had spent over a year in Brazil, and in one small corner of Brazil, studying the relations that exist there between various races. His book was a big book, full of tables and investigations and carefully phrased judgments. In three brief pages Mr. Frank gives us his findings on the same subject, in the same corner of Brazil. And his findings are the same as those of the plodding sociologist. The only difference is that the way Mr. Frank states his findings sticks in your mind, appeals to you as obviously true, without benefit of questionnaires, or of more than a few hours' observation.

That is Mr. Frank's great merit, and that is why anyone interested in knowing or learning about South America without going there could do far worse than read his books, particularly this one. Perhaps the kernel of his secret is the fact that he loves the people he writes about, loves them even more than he esteems Waldo Frank. Perhaps

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that is why we can put up with the truly appalling self-esteem which would otherwise mar every line he writes. However highly he values himself, however much he assumes that he is the all-wise cultural ambassador from his own country to our South American neighbors, he loves those neighbors more.

Thus when he tells us of his almost despair for Argentina, when he writes of the black reaction in that country, a reaction which very nearly cost him his life and which inflicted upon him honorable scars, he does it all in the spirit of a man who truly loves a woman, and loves her profoundly enough to be willing to admit her temper, her pride that comes near destroying her, and that for most people would make her utterly unlovable. It is a hard thing to describe, this sort of deep and brooding affection, affection for a land and its folk, the folk viewed almost as an emanation of the land, but always admitted to be more than an emanation of the land. Mr. Frank's favorite adjective seems to be "telluric."

In all conscience he is outspoken enough about the Church and its ministry. He is aware of its great formative influence. He meets bishops whom he does not hesitate to describe as capable of cruelty; he meets bishops whom he obviously admires as highly as he admires any man. His general thesis is that somehow we must combine democracy, meaning respect for the human person in every person, with an economic collectivism which he sees to be inevitable. He tends to make a religion of democracy, and with that we cannot agree. But his yearning, his insistence upon justice shows that he remains faithful to what is perhaps, after all, the most profound, the most valuable, the most constant good in his own people.

Mr. Eliot

THERE is a quotation from "Herakleitos" before you reach the first of these four poems and that is something you have to skip if you do not know Greek. Greek is a completely secret language only for the American youths who wander through B class movies giving Greek letter pins to girls. Also "Herakleitos" is available in translation. There is nothing wrong in prefacing "Four Quartets" with a Greek quotation, and we mention the quotation only because it did remind us that there have been times, in the past, when Mr. Eliot's erudition demanded a little too much of the reader. Of course he was never as difficult as Ezra Pound or Joyce—which is a careless sort of statement to make, for Pound and Joyce are not difficult for the same reasons; Joyce is difficult for serious reasons, Pound out of snobbishness. Probably we should not have brought up this question of difficulty at all since in "Four Quartets" Mr. Eliot's memories and erudition are completely assimilated.

Here is an example of what we mean. In "East Coker," the second poem, there is this lovely cadence:

> In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
> But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble

and in "Little Gidding," the last poem, there is a long conversation with a ghost:

> I met one walking, loitering and hurried
> As if blown toward me like the metal leaves
> Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.

In the first two lines quoted here there is direct translation but there is also modulation. In the sustained tone of the talk with the "dead master," Dante talks again with Virgil. But the point is that these overtones, although they add greatly to the density of the poem, are not necessary for its immediate comprehensibility. Mr. Eliot uses a musical title for these four poems. The more the reader shares Mr. Eliot's cultivation the more he will be able to perceive the voices, enjoy the structure, but even one who is not a trained musician goes to the concert.

This was a strange, clumsy way to approach what we wish to say about "Four Quartets." But it is a fact that there are people who avoid Mr. Eliot, fearing the difficulties he may present, and what we are trying to say is that a certain difficulty of a technical nature no longer exists. And that now the difficulty of understanding and feeling these poems is a legitimate difficulty, a stimulating difficulty. Mr. Eliot's thought is not a simple thought because it moves in high and serious realm. Mr. Eliot is not in the simple poetic predicament of explaining a broken heart nor in the equally simple business of making fun of such a predicament. He is the poet discussing man's fate, on equal terms with the philosopher. His truth must be as precise, as technically valid as the philosopher's truth. Eliot consorts with Maritain, with Bergson.

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future, . . .

His is the poetry of the mind. Yet, as always, at a certain height, the stones, the memories, the human, and beauty and music are there. The soul and the mind lose nothing, forget nothing as they advance toward truth. Emotion and all the sounds of the world and of words are there.

That is the climate of great poetry. You do not read great poetry unprepared, ignorant or carelessly. Mr. Eliot's poetry is exacting: it has the right to be so.

Columnist's Boyhood

CONDUCTORS of personal columns grow so used to exposing their minds and their feelings in public—and getting well paid for it, thank you—that they are ideally suited for revealing their own family secrets. Mr. Driscoll does it well. And in the course of the telling of his colorful boyhood and youth near Wichita, Kansas, he draws a rather terrifying picture of his father, Big Flurry.

Driscoll père was a giant of a man. He was given to violent bursts of anger against his gentle wife, his beasts of burden and fate generally. His language was often profane and he could call down the roundest of curses on those he felt were crossing him. Much of his conversation was on the coarse side, although he was fundamentally modest and decent. When aroused by the behavior of some poor horse that worked about the place, he would lay about him with a two-by-four until his giant arms were tired. Yes, Flurry Driscoll was a brutal, violent man.

In his latter years particularly, he became more and more alienated from his patient wife and drew more and more within himself. There was always flashing before his mind, especially when he had freely imbibed, the prospect of leaving everything behind and returning to his native Ireland. He often voiced this threat as he bemoaned the hard life he was leading and the cruelty of fate. Yet through his tremendous vitality and perseverance he had not only succeeded in building up a productive farm on the most unpromising soil but in his latter years he had come to make it pay, and pay well.

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But there are many other intriguing elements in this book. One has to do with careers in rural Kansas in those simpler days. For instance, John E. Driscoll, the eldest brother, was a whiz at penmanship. This was the channel into which he had poured the artistic longings which were so alien to his father. Without much help from home he worked his way steadily up, winning on the way the grand prize for the best penmanship among business college students in North America. "He received a cash prize in gold, plus a gold badge. The badge, chosen in preference to a medal, was a neat little scroll with quill pen engraved on it, together with a record of the award. It occupied a place on the left lapel of J. E.'s vest throughout his life. When vest lapels went out of style J. E. had his vests tailored with lapels just the same." Eventually J. E. was made the head of a business college of his own.

Margaret, on the other hand, studied to become a teacher, but she was a character too. She seemed to think nothing of driving to town behind a wild little steed which always threatened to run away with her and often did, powerful as Margaret was. She could, in fact, handle the mare better than Big Flurry could, and she never resorted to his terrible beatings. Marie, the older and more attractive sister, married and lived nearby.

The Driscolls were Catholics. Going in to Wichita for Mass on Sundays was one of the great events of the week. In his later years, much to his wife's anxiety, Big Flurry stopped going in with them. The one priest who appears in the narrative with any frequency and who rises to every occasion is a Father Tihen of Wichita, who later became a bishop. A good deal of the charm of Catholic Ireland runs through the conversation of Aunt Fannie, who came on from Erie, Pennsylvania, to visit the family. Best of all is the authentic atmosphere of boyhood on the farm, with its chores and difficulties, its games and socials and its exciting happenings. It was a full and strenuous life which fear of Big Flurry could not rob of its zest.

More Books of the Week

Force and Freedom, Reflections on History. Jacob Burckhardt. Edited by James Hastings Nichols. Pantheon Books, Inc. $3.50.

MR. NICHOLS deserves our gratitude for his introduction of Jacob Burckhardt into the current debates and our introduction to the man and his work. His knowledge of Burckhardt's background and Continental scholarship before and after appears to be unlimited. The surprising prognoses of the great Swiss historian of the nineteenth century which have merited him the title of prophet have been recognized by such eminent scholars as Waldemar Gurian and, if I am not mistaken, Christopher Dawson. However, as a whole I fear this book still shows that Burckhardt is definitely "dated" and not as timeless as assumed, and belongs to the generation in which he lived. The beautifully bound and printed volume will make your library more complete in a good sense and be a source for stunning quotations. His "Renaissance" ought to have more appeal to our minds, even though that work too has been superseded by a new vision. To call "scholasticism" an "abject tool of the Church, wielded by mendicant orders," the Waldensians "representations of the Primitive Church," to speak of the "fanaticism of Cluny" and to see in the investiture dispute of the eleventh century a "disguised force of the WORLD" working in

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"much salutary irritation—"

"There are some Catholics who will feel that Sister Mariella's selections are great and modern but not always Catholic in the sense that the word 'catholic' connotes reticence and idealization. Her book should provide much salutary irritation." The reviewer for the Springfield CATHOLIC MIRROR from whom we quote (and will quote at greater length below) was quite right about the irritation!

In fact there has been so much discussion of the title that there has been a tendency to forget the stories in this superb collection. So, since Sister Mariella didn't like the title in the first place and accepted it under protest ("execrable" she called it) we have decided to re-issue the book under a new title:

THEY ARE PEOPLE:
Modern Short Stories of Nuns, Monks and Priests

and if you prefer that title, drop us a line and we will gladly mail you one of the new jackets. But to return to what the reviewer in the CATHOLIC MIRROR said:

"The 'new' short story popularized by the O'Brien anthology and STORY MAGAZINE is now about fifteen years old. Since most of its early practitioners and admirers were found among literary radicals, a good many conservative readers have distrusted it so much that they have not bothered to estimate [*the new story form*] at its true value. Not so Sister Mariella Gable, O.S.B., professor of English at a prominent midwestern Catholic college for women.

"Sister Mariella introduces her twenty-three authors with as peppery an introduction as the reader will encounter in many a moon. 'Edification at the expense of truth is always a doubtful good. The stories collected in the present volume are true in the best sense of the word. They are collected here for the convenience and delight of Catholic readers who might otherwise miss them, and for discriminating readers everywhere. . . .' She regards the emergence of the new fiction as an important ally of Catholic literature, which has had in this country a very slow growth.

" 'For the most part,' she writes, 'Catholic magazines are entirely innocent of this new distinguished fiction. They have sinned along with the "slicks" in catering to popular taste. The large circulation magazines, particularly the women's magazines, consistently print happy-ending stories that glorify romantic love. The Catholic magazines patronize the same mentality, with a subtle philosophy of life conspicuously more harmful. They seem to say: "If you say your prayers (especially if they are repeated nine successive days), if you are good and do the right things, then you shall have a job, succeed in your ambitions, be crowned with the good things of this world" —a kind of back-stairs entrance to materialism, particularly enticing because its easy steps are padded and comfortable with a righteous piety.'

"A common denominator of all the stories is authenticity and punch. Perhaps the most provocative tale in the book is Morley Callaghan's *The Young Priest.* Sister Mary Francis' *A Nun's Diary* tells us exactly how a young and carefully brought up American girl feels and acts during a trying novitiate. Among the remaining selections Frank O'Connor's humorous *First Confession,* Geoffrey Household's picaresque *The Salvation of Pisco Gabar* and John Conley's psychological study of seminarians, *Momento,* are the best."

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR—December 1942.

They Are People: Modern Short Stories of Nuns, Monks and Priests, $3.00.

Sheed & Ward · 63-5 Av. N. Y. C.

the Church, examples picked from only two pages of this book, may justify the term "dated" used above. The work is full of such statements.

Apart from these Catholic objections to his views there are a few other things which seem at least questionable. Burckhardt was opposed to free public education, e.g., and the construction of new schools, because he suspected that it was not out of a desire for higher culture, but of greed that these things were done. All they would accomplish was to pour out "endless generations of the discontented" who would turn in their unemployment and disillusion to the promises of any demagogue. The editor then quotes Germany as an example for the truth of this "prophecy." It is amazing to see that a man as great as Burckhardt could not see the difference between true education and what has been sold us as "education" during the last century and more. We have no quarrel with him, if he means "modern" education, but we refuse to believe that there is a safe method of protecting society by singling out a desirable and educable *élite,* while the rest can go on in blissful ignorance to avoid discontent, demagogues and burning of books by half- and miseducated masses.

The net result of this publication, apart from its sheer merit of filling a gap in our information, will be a new light on time-worn assumptions and a rethinking and close examination of what is so often accepted as obvious. I think the book is a challenge that needs answering.

H. A. REINHOLD.

Mr. Tibbs Passes Through. Robert Neumann. Dutton. $2.50.

IT IS not easy to follow Mr. Tibbs on his passage "through." He is emphatically neither a Pippa nor a Mr. Britling. Although the scene of his journey—or rather, the last stage of it—is a bit of bomb-stricken English countryside, this is no more to him than "outward circumstance." (Nor does it seem greatly to matter to the bulk of the local population who manage to keep going their time-honored festivities in the face of air raids carrying widespread destruction.)

Arrested in their peregrinations at this point in space by an accident to their car, he and his family, consisting of two daughters and a grandson, decide to remain there. All three members of this family invariably address him as "Mr. Tibbs," and the author in turn always refers to the two younger of them as "the girl Archibald" and "the boy Pugh." This seems, in the first instance, a bit unnatural in view of the close relationship involved, until one becomes aware of Mr. Tibbs's prevailing characteristic in his domestic relations, his aloofness. Bitterly reproached by his elder daughter for his life-long refusal of responsibility for any share in the direction of their destinies, he begins to take thought upon this negative aspect of his career and does succeed in preventing the suicide of "the boy Pugh," but it is now too late by reason of his failing vitality to do anything about the elopement of the girl and the highly problematical journey to London of his other daughter and her son in the company of the hamlet's local bad man. Mr. Tibbs, essentially a gentle nature, more concerned with the things of the mind than with external events of whatever character, is thus left to die alone, which he accomplishes at once and with commendable grace.

It is obviously unfair to Mr. Neumann to center criticism about the facts of his tale, the virtue of which resides rather in the *stimmung*—its mood or emotional atmos-

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phere—and in such truth to character as he has achieved. This latter is best evidenced in Mr. Tibbs himself, the younger daughter—a lovely incarnation of the audacity of innocence—and the boy; the other characters appear to the present writer—perhaps were intended to be—largely unrealized.

The question naturally arises, Has Mr. Tibbs's pilgrimage a symbolic significance? One would have to grope amidst a variety of phenomena to discover it and be haunted throughout by the specter of the ineffectual.

Mr. Neumann's earlier books were burned by the Nazis in the country of his birth. This is the first to be written in English. J. K. PAULDING.

Brébeuf and His Brethren. E. J. Pratt. Basilian Press. $1.25.

IT IS an interesting fact that, just as the best Catholic novel of the last few years—"The Song of Bernadette"—was written by a Jew, so this notable Catholic poem was written by a Protestant. It is not quite in the same class with Werfel's great novel, and hardly deserves the extravagant praise it has received in certain quarters, but at least it must be said to be striking and arresting. One can easily believe that Dr. Pratt had no serious competition when he won the prize given by the Governor-General of Canada in 1940. This is its first American edition.

A curious literary problem is raised by the book. Only very rarely does the poet permit himself to be poetic. Here and there there are lines like:

> Under the stars,
> Along an incandescent avenue
> The visions trembled, tender, placid, pure.

More commonly the blank verse is so straightforward and matter-of-fact as to seem prosaic. Yet the total effect is very far from being flat. And it may be a matter for wonder how this is. Partly no doubt it is because the epic theme cannot fail to move the mind; partly it is because Dr. Pratt is a good story-teller; but also, I think, it is because he has been willing to keep himself (as poet) out of the picture and to allow his heroic theme to glow in its own grandeur. Danger was the daily bread for Brébeuf, Jogues, Garnier, Bressani and the other seventeenth century missionaries to the Indians of Canada, and martyrdom was the cup that awaited them at the end. But they took all this for granted, and it has now been fittingly conveyed in a bare, undecorated style. This, I assume, was what the poet intended; in it he has amply succeeded. THEODORE MAYNARD.

Capricornia. By Xavier Herbert. D. Appleton-Century. $3.00.

THIS huge, sprawling story (649 pages, 100 principal characters) which won the Australian Commonwealth Literary Prize Competition has been widely heralded by imperial reviewers, approved by H. G. Wells, and boosted through a foreword by Carl Van Doren. The main features of the chorus of praise are that it is authentically national, a lusty pioneer picture and an angry indictment of the treatment of the aborigines.

The native flavor is apparent. Mr. Herbert has crowded his stage with all classes of people: ranchers, stockmen, settlers, missionaries, store-keepers, government officials, railway workers, boat crews, Chinese, Solomon Is-

"casting the stone gods out of the soul of the Gael"

"I SAT UP LATE to finish my first reading . . . of Robert Farren's THIS MAN WAS IRELAND . . . I wish I had the critical equipment necessary for dealing adequately with this book of strong, stirring song, but I lack such equipment, and what I say about it is just about what the ordinary reader, as distinguished from the specialist in poetry, would say. . . .

"The work opens with St. Patrick kneeling 'on the knives of his knees' and asking God whether his labors, obviously soon to end, will come to fruit.

'Patrick the Paul of the Gael, grew a scalpful of snow casting the stone gods out of the soul of the Gael.'

The first two lines fire the reader's imagination and evoke an instantaneous recognition of the poet's genius. . . . From here on the reader will relish the changes in pace, from long, wintry lines to frolicking lyrics, and the effortless skill of the poet with rhymes ranging from the intricate and esoteric to the simple.

"He will mark many a phrase, like *'the greening throe of grass'* or *'the tarns of his eyes'* or *'the guttering sea'*; many a line like *'candle on candle tiptoed into the gloom'* or *'to sew the day, instant to instant, with the seams of prayer,* or *'men do not prove their wisdom with spears'*; many a verse like

' . . . from him
wisdom rilled
like invisible rain
quickening his people
like a drenched plain.'

"Mr. Farren is a scholar as well as a poet, and his verse is loaded with the riches of his learning. There are many footnotes explaining who or what is meant by the clusters of formidable Gaelic words. These at first come between the reader and the work and rein in the swift pleasure which he would take in it. But soon he has mastered the essentials of this lore, and the footnotes thin out. When he is acclimated, he can give himself wholly to the delight which this remarkable music kindles. . . .

'We whet the chisels of our minds on chastity, and bite the basalt learning. Thus we carve a causeway to the light. And while the sun goes sidling on from sky to sky we mark with strict arithmetic of prayer the day from dark to dark in three half-hundred psalms. . . .'

"One of the most striking features of this work is the poet's obvious appreciation of liturgical prayer. Again and again he brings it into his poem; again and again he coins fresh figures to convey its beauty and its power. . . .

"In his first approach a few passages may appear like hard, unyielding buds which the light of the reader's mind cannot bring to flower. These he can pass over quickly. But he should come back to them later, when he has finished the whole. He will then find that many of them are less impervious to his eye. . . .

'. . . a place for a man
to be apart from men
to lay open his soul
At the knuckles of God. . . .'

"I sat up late to finish my first reading of this lovely, sinewy, searching, symphonic work. I intend to return to it as food for faith and for prayer."

John S. Kennedy in THE CATHOLIC TRANSCRIPT

THIS MAN WAS IRELAND, The Song of Columcille the First Exile, by Robert Farren. Price $3.00.

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A HUNDRED COMMUNITIES of men and women, and many missionary priests and Bishops besides, working in a thousand mission stations, in our own and other lands, have been aided, will be helped again. "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." (St. Matthew: 25, 40.)

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to The Rev. Edward F. Garesché, S.J., President of The Catholic Medical Mission Board, 10 West 17th St., New York, N. Y.

landers, direct descendants of primitive tribesmen, half-castes, and all the problem children of miscegenation. The director's hand is lavish. The settings, too, are excellent.

The author, who has done it all on foot, roams again over every mile of the Northern Territory, and describes its flora, fauna and meteorology in accurate detail. The speech also has an alien flavor, although at times a glossary would be of service.

Any story of the birth-pangs of a nation is bound to be crowded with rowdy characters, brutality and bloodshed, injustice and tumult, and an almost complete absence of culture. But even in the midst of a ruthless advance against and over original rights of possession and occupancy, there actually exist some persons of worth, decency and greatness. Mr. Herbert's story has no noble figures.

The lead parts are played by Oscar and Mark Shillingworth, property-owner and outlaw, and the latter's half-breed bastard, Norman. The possibilities of a strong contrast between the weakling wastrel of a father and the scorned "yeller-feller" who had some mechanical brilliance, and who was once told that he could rise and lead his race, are squandered, since the author seems resolved to reduce them both to the level of the other rakes of the volume.

Almost everyone in the story is a thorough rake, in what moderns would call the "heroic" manner, although the treatment is that of the police court record, avoiding bawdry. The lesser characters are stock ones, with names like Thackeray's: Brother Bleeter and Sisters Wing and Harp of the Hallelujah Gospel Mission, trooper O'Crimnell and Prosecutor Thumscrough, officers Settaroge and Tocatchwon.

This amused, detached handling of what should be strong satire is also what weakens the thesis of the story. One is expected to feel sorry for the native population —with an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" sort of pity—but individually they warrant no sympathy. Tocky O'Cannon, Norman's final mistress, whose death closes the book on an allegedly tender note, is merely a discarded elemental nymph.

Indeed Norman himself does not really suffer because of lost opportunities; he goes to pieces over social rebuffs; he never really looked up, and was too content to pull himself down. The very essence of tragedy is constantly missed.

Instead of expressing strong anger at what the whites have done to the aborigines, or at what the natives have allowed themselves to become, Mr. Herbert is alternately disinterested or fascinated. He appears to enjoy the riot of living he portrays, like an appreciated tavern-story teller.

There are a few meager exceptions: the description of the native compound, the laxity and snobbishness and criminal negligence which prevail in the Port Zodiac Hospital, the crassness of casual murder are angry castigations with genuine strength.

In a period when Australia is so much in headlines, and readers are earnestly curious about the psychological background of their neighbors, it is regretted that the people of the commonwealth were not made more representative. The work is hardly what its author calls it: "a hymn book written in adoration." There is nothing to adore, and little to admire.

JAMES EDWARD TOBIN.

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